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*The Function of the Modern Minister

Johannes A. C. Fagginger Auer

The phrase "re-valuation of values" has been a familiar one in all books of philosophy and theology since the days of Nietzsche. Granting for the moment that there is a certain fixity about the things which appear valuable to us, it cannot be denied that there is constant need of re-appreciation of those relatively stable values. Man and the World, Righteousness and Truth are values;—both the terms and the general concepts to which they apply are permanent, but the content which is covered by the term or implied in the concept is constantly changing. . . . The permanency of terms in spite of their ever changing content is one of the standing miracles. Surely a Greek did not mean by the concept World what the thirteenth century scholastic meant by it, nor did the scholastic attribute to this term the significance which it has with us today, but the word itself has not been changed since Plato wrote his dialogues four centuries before Christ. The human intellect, ready enough to let the old content go, clings to the old terms which supposedly indicate the nature of the content.

What is the reason for this fact? Is it a lack of imagination through which the human brain has failed to supply a new word whenever a new thought arose? Is it a result of a mere following of the path of least resistance by reason of which, for the sake of saving effort, we are constantly pouring new wine into old bottles? Who shall say? Yet the fact remains that we are doing precisely this thing.

It cannot be denied that this habit of ours, whatever the cause, has led to a good deal of misunderstanding and conflict, for the result has been that many people, though using the same terms, mean entirely different things by the words which they employ. Hence the constant accusations of intellectual

*Commencement address at the Meadville Theological School, June 14, 1932.

dishonesty with which history abounds. We hear it said, for instance, that the term God has a fixed content which has been given to it by history. When therefore the Hegelian speaks of the all-pervading reason and the Humanist of the eternal and unchangeable law, they are warned not to apply the name God to either of the concepts because this would be straining the meaning of the term. Let them, people say, use other terms. Nevertheless the Hegelian often, and the Humanist more often than one would suppose, desire to use the term God and maintain that they have as good a right to it as any Theist; hence conflict.

All of which is but by way of introducing the observation that the idea Minister has not escaped the common lot of all concepts. Its content has changed with the ages and is changing all the time. If the requirement is to be fulfilled that the name of any given thing shall in some sense be explanatory of its function, the name by which is designated a person who serves the religious needs of a group of men and women should have to be changed twice at least in every generation. And it is indeed a historical fact that the variety of functions performed by the Minister has been responsible for a change in the official title of the functionary whenever the occasion demanded it.

Israel knew its Priests, its Levites and its Prophets. The early Christian Church has its Exhorters, its Teachers, its Deacons, its Presbyters, and later its Bishops, its Archbishops and finally its Pope. It is not possible to compare all of these men with the Minister of today in any strict sense. . . . Neither the Prophet nor the Exhorter was an official functionary, except in the case of such Prophets as may have been permanently connected with the King's court. The Levites, though once having belonged to the priestly class, were forced to perform menial duties when the Jewish worship became concentrated in Jerusalem. Neither Deacons nor Presbyters are Ministers in the sense in which we use this word today. Yet each of these men in some sense represented one of the functions now concentrated in the task of the one single man whom we call Minister or Pastor. I say Minister or Pastor. It is a curious thing that in the Protestant Church these two names

have persisted rather than any others. It is curious because, of all terms that could be used, these two are the least definite. One understands the function of a Priest; it is precise, concrete; but of a Minister one can only say that he is one who serves and of a Pastor that he is one who guides. It is not evident from the word itself in what the services of the Minister consist nor in what direction the Pastor will lead his flock. In view of the rapid changes which the Protestant Church is undergoing it is perhaps just as well that we have chosen terms which readily adapt themselves to the taking on of a new content. No matter how the church will change, no matter whether in time to come we shall have any churches at all, we shall always need some men whose function it will be to serve and to guide others.

But, on the other hand, the fact that we are able to use so indefinite a name for a religious leader can only be explained by the fact that the task itself is not very definite. This gives rise to misunderstanding and conflict. There is no such trouble when we consider the duties of a Priest of the Roman Church. His task is definite enough. He reads Mass every day, he baptizes, he hears confessions, he administers the sacrament of extreme unction to the dying. You may not think that those duties are significant, and if that happens to be your opinion you simply do not go to a Roman Catholic Church, but nevertheless you cannot deny that those are the functions of a Priest. But the task of a Protestant Minister is far less definite and hence disagreement constantly arises touching its precise nature. It is this very fact which on many occasions causes difficulties between the Minister and his congregation. Both parties believe that they have an adequate understanding of the range of the duties of a Minister and both are in perfectly good faith. The congregation does not think that it is asking anything which is unreasonable, the Minister is of the opinion that he is giving all that should be asked of him, but, inasmuch as there is no basic agreement as to the duty of the religious leader of the congregation, serious conflicts occasionally arise.

It is worth while to investigate what, under the present circumstances, the task of the Minister may be. The result

of such an investigation can never be quite satisfactory because so many imponderabilia are involved in the matter. Yet the result, although general, may at least be sufficiently concrete to furnish a valuable indication of the direction in which further investigation must be conducted.

One of the first results of such an investigation may well prove to be that certain supposed parts of the Minister's duty should be eliminated, not because they are not in themselves desirable, but because they are impossible of realization. Men, particularly if they have undergone the influence of Calvinistic theology, are apt to believe that any demand upon man is absolute. You do not exact what it is impossible for a man to give,—this would be temporizing with the moral law after the fashion of Ignatius Loyola,—you demand perfection. The duty of a Minister is therefore described in absolute terms. His task is not designed with an eye to the possibility of his performance but relative to the needs, and all of the needs, of his congregation. If those needs require a hundred percent efficiency in any given direction, that efficiency must be realized. Taking a parallel case by way of illustration, if it should be deemed necessary for the welfare of the United States, as well as of the rest of the world, that this country should join the League of Nations, an absolute requirement, not unlike those often made of a Minister, would be that President Hoover be held responsible for making us join the League before the end of the present term of his administration.

In this address I propose to deal with the duty of the Minister not merely from the point of view of the absolute needs of the congregation but from a consideration of the ability of the Minister to function in a desirable direction, considering the limitations and restrictions under which he is compelled to work. It is obviously nonsensical to demand that a thing be done which cannot be done, merely because it would be desirable that it were done. Wisdom lies with the possible not with the impossible, and, although there is sound sense in the observation that only by trying the impossible can the utmost limit of the possible be reached, there are limitations to the truth implied in this saying. It is bad for anyone to get out of touch with reality. It is well enough to hitch your

wagon to a star but it is at the same time rather essential to discover whether your star is traveling in the direction in which you wish your wagon to go.

The question as to what a Minister should do is answered by a consideration of what he is capable of doing. My mother told me that when my grandfather, who was a minister, was buried, under his name which appeared upon his casket, three silver letters were affixed. V.D.M., Verbi Divini Minister. It is clear that his congregation considered him in the first place to be a man who ministered to them by making clear to them the meaning of the word of God. It was supposed that through his special study he had obtained an insight into the nature of ultimate reality which without such special application he could not have had.

The matter was no different in this country sixty or seventy years ago, even in churches which called themselves Unitarian. It is not altogether different now. Many a time a parishioner has come to me with the request that I should explain to him why a special calamity had befallen him. Those men were reasonable and thoughtful beings and in their ordinary moments they cannot have supposed that I had any knowledge with respect to the ultimate riddles of the human life which were not available to them through other channels. And yet in moments of stress they would come in the hope of receiving positive information regarding the ways of God with men which would result in their regaining their peace of mind. I hasten to say that, in part, their expectation was a reasonable one. Wholly abstracting from my own part in the matter, it is right to expect on general principles that a Minister should possess some information, should have some power, which, if put to the service of his people, would tend to set at rest the anxious heart which through the accidents of life had become disquieted. Only it is not to be supposed that this information concerns itself with ultimate reality.

A frank investigation of the facts forces us to admit that our task can no longer be the explanation of the nature of ultimate truth to those who do not know. I admit that it would be most desirable if we could make this our task, but the point is that we do not know this ourselves. As long as men believed

that they had themselves an unerring and ever adequate source of information concerning such matters in the written word of God, all was well. We ourselves might not know but we could always get our information from a source which no one could question. To the inquiry: is there a God?, we could say, yes, without hesitation or qualification. To the question, what is the nature of God, what is His relation to man, and what is His purpose with him, perfectly definite answers could be given. The nature of sin and virtue could be explained, nor was there need why anyone wishing to know whether life after death was a reality should go home without an answer fully adequate to the need which prompted the question. The ultimate answer to any doubt would always be: it is written. Thereafter there would be no room for any doubt.

But the unerring source of information is lacking to us who are serving in the liberal churches of our day. We have the Bible, it is true. We may even be said to have a better understanding of this book than our fathers had. But it would scarcely occur to anyone of us to explain the nature of ultimate truth on the strength of Biblical texts, nor would our congregations be likely to accept our evidence if resting on such a basis.

Yet the same questions recur. It matters little whether a man considers himself to be a Theist or a Humanist, the same problems present themselves for solution. The Humanist as well as the Theist desires to know the ultimate ground of all reality. To him too the question, is there a God?, is immortal life possible? has a distinct meaning, even if the same kind of answer might not satisfy him.

What then is there left for the Minister of this day to say on matters of this sort? Inasmuch as an adequate source of information is lacking he can but give his personal opinion, bolstered up by such evidence of relative worth as he may chance to find in the fields of science, philosophy and psychology. No matter how sure his inward conviction may be, the Minister of the present day, if he be an honest man, can only say: in my opinion, for reasons good enough for me, I have come to the conclusion that the nature of ultimate reality is such and such.

It follows that as long as his message deals with matters of this sort he cannot expect that his words will meet with the same ready reception which was given to the pulpit utterances of the Minister of sixty or seventy years ago. Let us remember that such a man, particularly in the orthodox churches, was the Verbi Divini Minister. His message was not accepted because it was his. The Minister's word received credence only because it was the word of God coming through the Minister's mouth. On matters not pertaining to religion the Minister's utterances had no more weight than those of anyone else, perhaps less. Even the most faithful of Roman Catholics will trust the judgment of a mathematician in matters pertaining to figures more readily than that of the Pope. Outside of the field of the explanation of church dogma there is no papal infallibility.

Your modern Minister as an interpreter of the word of God is no longer as important in the eyes of his congregation as was his early predecessor. His people do not attribute to him any special knowledge in such matters, and they are as apt to reject his opinion as to accept it. This fact has influenced the Ministers themselves and this is reflected in the type of topics which they are likely to choose for their Sunday morning sermons. Every Saturday evening the Boston *Transcript* publishes, as a part of its regular evening edition, a section which it calls The Churchman Afield. I read it carefully and I note that the old, well known sermon topics are getting fewer in number. There is a good deal of secularization of pulpit discussion. One may deplore the fact, but one cannot deny it. The Ministers less and less attempt to do the task to which their people think them inadequate.

What then is left for a Minister to do? Would you have him reduce to the task of speaking on mere ethical topics? Has religion ceased to be a reality in the sense that morality has quite usurped its place? I believe not. I would never agree to the proposition that a Minister is a man whose only function is to distinguish between good and bad behavior and who speaks upon this topic once a week. There is more to his office than that. It is to be observed, moreover, that as an authority in matters of morals his advantage over his parish-

ioners is scarcely greater than as an authority in matters pertaining to pure religion. The Minister's parishioners know quite as well as he what theoretically speaking comes under the head of good acting and bad acting. It does not require a sermon of twenty-five minutes in length to convince men that political graft is wrong. No one doubts the fact as an abstract theory anyway, not even the grafters themselves; the point is that this knowledge does not influence their action in the right direction. And yet it is essential that men be led to action in the direction of the good.

How can this be done? Not by information, in the sense that we fill the minds of men with facts regarding ultimate reality or morals of which they supposedly were ignorant. This is what the older Ministers believed and in this assumption they were wholly wrong. Surely they often stimulated men to action, to action of a most significant sort, as the work of the great reformers abundantly proves. But their success was due to a cause wholly different from the one which they supposed to be operative. It was due to the circumstance that the magic of their own example stimulated men, broke down their inhibitions, and allowed the strength which was within them to become released, so as to become available for good purposes.

The reason why no minister can hope to reform men merely by informing their minds arises from the fact that a fruitful religious experience is never the result of information, any more than the lack of a religious experience can be the result of a lack of information. The past looked upon man as a sort of empty vessel, which must be filled and which therefore must be brought into contact with the source of all truth. The truth in all of its fullness would then flow over into the empty soul, and the soul being thus filled would begin to function in ways that were true and desirable. We have slowly given up this theory. There is even now more power, more fundamental knowledge, in most men than they are ever likely to use. Their salvation lies not in the fact that someone shall add something to that which they already have but that they shall be taught how to use what they already have.

The task of the present minister consists, I repeat, not in

filling man's mind with supposed information concerning ultimate reality, the precise nature of which he himself knows no better than anyone else, but rather in teaching men to use for purposes of good a power already existent within them. The appeal which was once made entirely to the human intellect, but never to the human will (which was thought to be perverse) is now to the intellect and the will both. I once heard the Reverend Edwin Slocombe, formerly of Lexington, illustrate the use of information in the matter of education as follows: Mr. Slocombe had an old-fashioned pump in the back yard of his house. After the nature of old-fashioned pumps it occasionally would refuse to draw water because the vacuum had become destroyed. Mr. Slocombe would then take a pitcher of water and slowly pour its contents into the top part of the pump while working the handle at the same time. The vacuum would then be recreated and the water would come gushing forth, not merely the water poured in, but an abundant supply of water already contained in the well. Nothing had been given to the pump in addition to what it had; the pump had been stimulated to give what it already possessed.

If I should say that the modern minister, by giving information, should create a vacuum in the mind of his hearers the value of my advice might be rightly questioned. But if I should say that it is his duty through a certain kind of information to stimulate the minds of his hearers and thus to remove inhibitions which restrain normal activity, objections would become more difficult. The minister of seventy years ago was a servant of God in the first place. He felt sure that he knew God's will and he felt equally certain that, aided by the divine grace, he could reveal the divine purposes to men, who were benefited by learning of those purposes.

The present-day minister must first of all be a servant of men. Could he inform men regarding ultimate truth he would of course do so. But he realizes the limitation of his own information regarding such matters and he therefore directs his attention first of all to that which he can know, and should know,—human life itself. He learns to deal with it in order to further its normal expression and in order to correct its abnormal expression. He tries to save it from

danger when needful and at all times he endevors to assure its security.

Of course a minister is not a mere psychical healer. Many of the younger men seem to have come to that conclusion. One hears of many efforts of psychical reconstruction in connection with church work. The minister adds a psychologist, often an alienist, to his staff and now proceeds to deal with the cases of men and women who are ill-adjusted to life. I approve of this wholeheartedly. It was an evil day for the Christian church when it gave up healing of the soul in favor of informing the mind. But reconstruction is not all. What we need is a prophylactic. In China a physician receives fees for keeping a man well, not for curing him after he has become ill.

The minister must do preventive work. He should do this, first of all, through his preaching. Through it he should attempt to influence the minds and the wills of the normal men and women in his congregation for the sake of keeping them normal. It must be remembered that the normal mind needs stimulus in order to remain normal quite as much as the abnormal mind needs stimulus of a different sort in order to regain its normal health. It is a curious fact that after hundreds of years of preaching the value of the sermon is so little understood. Nine sermons out of ten deal with the abnormal. They are warnings against something, they are denunciations, they deal with danger, with sin, with the diseased mind. Hence, their content is applicable to very few in the congregation because the majority of the people before us are normally minded. If they were otherwise we could have no world at all. A sermon should be a constructive effort to stimulate normal men and women to continue to go on in the way in which their better inclinations have already told them they should go, not an attempt to scare them with the possible consequences of giving in to evil temptation. The introduction of the element of fear has no moral value of any sort. A wise physician guides the normal processes of nature which always tend toward the salvation of the human body. The physician of the soul should do the same in matters of the spirit, for the soul like the body tends to cure itself.

Of course, a minister does not deal with normal people only, else there would be no need for these clinics of which I spoke a moment ago. Sometimes he cannot do preventive work because the damage has already been done. He must cure. This he does through personal contact with the person to be cured. A psychical cure means that two minds, a sound one and a diseased one, learn to understand each other. The sound mind learns to appreciate the distorted reasoning of the sick soul before it, and the diseased mind gets a glimpse of how a sound intellect arrives at its conclusions. Paul speaks of Christ entering into a man and making him whole, so that for the time being he is not himself but Christ. Thus the mind of the healer, through sympathetic interest, enters into the other mind and helps it to rearrange its processes, stays with it in a sense, as long as the suffering mind is in need of help, until the cure has come.

The minister of today should not be one who merely informs but one who strengthens and, if need be, cures. His chief asset, and I speak as one who himself is a teacher in a theological school, should not be information of the type so long deemed necessary, but first of all an extreme sensitiveness to life itself and its problems. The eyes of a painter are like the eyes of anyone else. If one should examine them, one would discover no physical deviation of any sort and no doubt the same may be said of that part of the brain which receives the visual impressions. Nevertheless, both the eyes and the brain have come to serve the artist in a unique way; they have come to be exceedingly sensitive to impressions of color and form, to a recognition of all that conforms to the standards of beauty or varies from those standards.

The reason for this is the fact that the artist is constantly in touch with things that are beautiful. Beauty, if for the sake of clarity I may be allowed to use the concept in its objective form, beauty insists that it shall be understood. Live with it long enough and it will work in upon man until it renders sensitive to its perfection organs not normally sensitive to it.

It is thus with man's sensitiveness to life. Live with men long enough, live for men long enough, and human life will

eventually render itself intelligible to you, complex though it be. It, too, insists that it be understood. It will make use of your senses, dull at first, and unable to transmit the meaning of the truth of life, and it will render them exceedingly sensitive to that truth until they will transmit readily to your consciousness the slightest sign of need or pain or hope or joy in a human being before you.

Theology has been *theo*logy so long, it has insisted for so long a time that a minister live with a God removed from man that ministers have forgotten the art of living with men themselves. This must change. In one sense all of us, whether officially we call ourselves so or not, must become Humanists.

There indeed lies the whole truth of Humanism, that it insists that any consideration of the truth shall start with man and be conducted with reference to man. Theologians have started at the wrong end of the problem, they have put their conclusions before their premises. They have tried to understand the life of man by the aid of the notion concerning the nature and essence of a God, removed from man. They have tried to explain the nearby by means of the far-off, the known by the aid of the unknown, and thus as early as the thirteenth century we possessed a complete and detailed theology, a knowledge of God, but no knowledge of man worth mentioning. Hence there was no sensitiveness to life and its needs, there was instead great callousness. The same human creatures which developed the glorious drama of the Mass, whose hands built the cathedral at Chartres, persecuted and tortured their fellow beings in a way which passes understanding. The eye sensitive to the slightest variation of color could not recognize human need and the ear which took in with the delight of keen appreciation the accent of the priests' intonation of the gospel was deaf to the sound of human suffering.

Leaders of men, guides in the way of truth, who have lived long with the far-off God, must now learn to live with the men that are about them in order that their ears and their eyes may be open to human need. That is Humanism, that is at least the worthful part of it. The attack against Humanism is usually leveled against incidental teachings, which being

incidental matter little. That some Humanists deny the existence of a personal God or immortality is incidental; they may well change their opinions concerning those matters, indeed they may have to do so. But not incidental, but fundamental is the Humanist doctrine that no one has a right to talk about ultimate reality until he has dealt exhaustively with reality in its present and limited form as it appears in the life of man. The way leads from man to God, not as theology has formerly taught, from God to man.

Your duty as ministers of this present age is to live with men until you can read in their souls as we read in an open book. And in so doing you are but following a great tradition, not explicit in the teachings of the church but implicit. For underneath all of the objectionable theology of the Christian church lies a faith of great beauty which has nourished man and through which the church has persisted. It is a belief in the ultimate worth of humanity. The development of man's belief in his own worth, as being the very tap-root of all significant dogma, has never been made fully clear, but it must now be made clear by the teachers of theology of this present period. The deification of Jesus is but the glorification of human life, the victory of Arius at Nicea was but a victory for manhood inasmuch as it was an insistence that manhood be made an indispensable part of the being of God himself. When the fathers at Chalcedon determined that Jesus was as fully a man as he was a God, they but subconsciously reiterated their belief that there can be no full God-hood apart from full manhood.

The two texts upon which the church is founded forever are: first, the angel's words in the second chapter of Luke: "I bring unto you good tidings of great joy, for there is born unto you this day a savior, *a babe,* wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger." Salvation comes about because somewhere a woman brings forth a child, one who in the fullness of time will become a man such as you are and such as I am.

And the second important text is the one found in I Corinthians, 1:23, where Paul says: "We preach unto you Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block and unto

the Greeks foolishness but unto them that are called the power of God and the wisdom of God." Manhood is here pictured as victorious through the very thing which might lead to its defeat, suffering. Here we have before us the hands of a man, free and forcing this world to subject itself to his will, though they are nailed immobile to a cross.

The church has lived through its belief in man, it has lifted itself to God only through this belief in man. But it has never quite understood the way in which it arrived at its own conclusions. Its thoughts have been confused and contradictory but the elementary urge underneath is clear and strong.

You, in your age, will have to reinterpret all dogma in terms of man. You will not really be doing a different thing from what the fathers have done before you at Nicea, at Chalcedon, at Constantinople. You will but be rendering explicit what was implicit in their teachings. You will but be teaching the old gospel, the only gospel the church ever truly had. You will but be making clear and unmistakable what in confused accents the former generations have taught. God-hood is born in manhood, a babe lying in a manger; it grows with manhood; it is victorious in manhood, stronger than suffering, stronger than death. It is greater than manhood in one sense, because it refuses to be limited to manhood as it now is. It takes in the possibility of development in the great future before us. It is greater than manhood because it takes in man's relations to his cosmic environment; it makes him a part of a vaster whole and thereby makes his actions more meaningful and his life more significant. But it is never apart from manhood for to God-hood manhood is essential.

This school is sending you forth to preach an old message, the oldest in the world. Make it new in that you render it clear and unmistakable to them who will listen to your words. And as it was the greatest glory of those who went before you that they were called "Verbi Divini Ministri" "of the word of God, servants" may it be your greatest glory that men shall call you "Generis Humani Ministri" of the human race, servants. Perhaps it will be found that the one phrase includes the other.

*The Use and Abuse of Words in Inducing Religious Experience

Edwin H. Wilson

There has been chosen as the theme of this conference the phrase "Religion as Comprehending Experience"—a phrase which was coined, I believe, by Dr. Von Ogden Vogt. In my effort to deal with some implications of this theme I shall be particularly concerned with the words we use during the Sunday morning service. I do so as one who shares a widespread discontent with our social order and who is anxious that the church service shall further and not hinder the creation of a more satisfying world. This is only one and not the most important of the problems involved in the creation of a new social order. But if and when the church service serves as a substitute for doing something about the *status quo*, it does become a serious question.

The definition of religion as comprehending experience needs at the start to be qualified. It might be taken to imply that religion is an exclusively intellectual experience. To comprehend is "to grasp mentally," "to have knowledge of." But the word "experience" implies feeling and doing as well as thinking. Experience is more than intellectual behavior. A religion that was merely a matter of the intellect would be without great influence on the social order because it would be divorced from action.

One need not go very far to find rituals that end in themselves and have no relation to the rest of life. I heard recently a church solo the theme of which was "Peace, Let Nothing Offend." I cannot conceive of anything very helpful emerging from a religious experience in which that spirit predominated. Our problem is to make sure that a certain polarity is

*An address delivered at the Western Unitarian Conference, May 17, 1932.

maintained between what we say in church and what needs to be done outside. What we say on Sunday and what we do later constitute, together, the complete religious experience. Experience that is really inclusive implies participation in the whole life-process of humanity. It breaks down the barriers between the Sunday service and the rest of the week.

As a religious fellowship, it is certain that we could not get very far without words. Words are instruments of co-operation. They are implements for transferring experience and sharing common ends. They are man-made tools and we are responsible for their right use. The net proceeds of humanity's trial and error come to us through words. A living concept is a capsule into which are compressed many individual or distinct experiences of the past. A single word can imply an entire philosophy. Such concepts, organized in lyrical form, can release pent-up feelings and stimulate thought. They can nourish us. They can breathe the spirit of life into dry bones and set free the creative imagination. They can fill to overflowing the empty cup that is our inner life. I have nothing against a religious experience that is in and of itself satisfying and strength-bringing. But I do not want it to end there. Words can also remind us of our part in the brotherhood of man and in a church service are rightly to be used to that end. I have heard prayers which invoked the divine blessing upon everyone from the President of the United States to the garbage collector or the postman. Such democratic inclusiveness may have caused an aristocratic eyebrow here and there to rise, but it illustrates the power of words to bring to our consciousness in an appreciative and reverent mood the concrete world of men and things.

In a recent "Christian Century" article, Dwight Bradley deplored a tendency frequently apparent in Protestant churches to revert to archaic forms of liturgy. "To-day," he tells us, "we speak a different language of devotion from what our fathers spoke. A new ritual," he says, "is emerging which will sound with a ring of reality which the older religion has constantly lost."

One of the best customs is that by which ministers exchange calendars and orders of service. From this exchange

many of us know that something is going on within our liberal churches in the direction of a new liturgy. Both humanists and theists are participating. It is arising as the spontaneous answer to the needs of our ministers and congregations. This is good, because only in that way can vital ritual emerge. A commission on services may sift material according to standards of excellence but it can not create a ritual over night out of nothing. Many churches and many ministers eventually will do it.

When we ask why new service elements are thus needed and are actually being created, we do not have to look very far for our answer. The liberal churches have continually recruited their ranks with persons who left orthodoxy because those persons had felt the stirrings of conscience when week after week they found themselves forced by tradition and creed to repeat certain words which no longer seemed true or valid to them. We have preached that one thing should be intolerable to a free man, and that is to be forced to say with his lips what he does not believe in his heart.

That to-day we should be giving up service elements which have been hallowed by long usage and sanctified for the ritualist by their perfection of form, is accordingly not surprising. That new materials are replacing the old, often different in form and function, also follows this doctrine of conscience in the use of words. A socially-conscious ministry and laity will not be content with a service that merely makes people comfortable and complacent. Such a ministry is through with religion as an anaesthetic for those who are discontented. It would seek rather to fan that discontent and direct the energy it releases toward social ends. Nor will a truth-conscious ministry which for decades has belabored orthodoxy for its lack of candor in giving new interpretations to the miracles, be for long or with peace of mind content to use the same ethics in endlessly pouring new wine into old skins.

It is a fact that much of the liturgical material of which we are most fond is the out-moded survival of a pre-scientific day and an obstruction to progress. We need not make a sweeping rejection of all biblical materials to recognize the

fact that some of the readings that are used portray an ideal in the form of a highly anthropomorphic God, a Lord of Hosts with a warlike and revengeful spirit who is on a lower level than the best morality of the present.

Moreover, the petitional element of prayer is, for many, a no-longer-valid survival of the use of words as a magical technique for finding security, response and recognition. The praise element, likewise, is a survival of the effort magically to get on the good side of the Gods. People flattered God and said "Give us rain," "Destroy our enemies," "Deliver us from evil." But if any one thing has characterized theological trends since the war, it has been the effort to shift the responsibility for evil from God to the shoulders of men. The old liturgies cultivated dependence upon God to do what men are now beginning to feel they must do for themselves. This tendency is manifest in the new ritual that is emerging. People are now demanding that church services have a realistic content that corresponds with truth and leads to human self-dependence.

As scientific knowledge advances the gap between old terminology and the modern temper increases. With it comes an increased burden upon those who use the old words in service or sermon to define their meaning. A minister may have effected his own reconciliation of old words and new meanings. He may be able to use archaic phrases with present significance to himself. But inevitably there will be those, especially the younger members who have been to the universities and exposed to the scientific world-view, who won't know what he means. Like the character in one of Gilbert and Sullivan's plays, he has forever to be saying "And that's what I mean when I say, when I sing. . . ." The result of this effort to put new wine into old bottles is that the minister either has to leave himself open to the charge of hypocrisy and equivocation or continually to be defining and re-defining. In some cases it might not be inappropriate to call his church, instead of the "First Unitarian Society" the "First Analytical Society," or instead of the "Church of All Souls" the "Church of all Definitions." Unless we move on steadily toward a modern ritual employing words that are intellectually valid

to-day without need for continual apology, I cannot see that we shall have anything to offer that will distinguish our churches from the ordinary modernist churches. And the cause of clarity, truth and progress will suffer. We will be too busy defining to be able to do anything in a practical way.

One of the chief abuses of words in their use to develop religious experience arises from the fact that there is no necessary connection between the use of words and thought or action. People can repeat familiar and emotionally potent words without really having an idea in their heads or without any action resulting. They can use the great concepts "Truth," "Goodness," "Beauty" with gusto and have no notion of what experience has been compressed into these words by critical thinkers. The various catchwords of liberalism—"progress, freedom, brotherhood, character, experience, liberty"—can be used just as superficially. The really deep and spiritual person is the one who by study of the actual world is able to use such words with knowledge of the reality they represent. The words that are dangerous are exactly those words which, having had their content evaporated from them by frequent and uncritical usage, have become vain repetitions and empty platitudes.

Words change and degenerate. Perhaps some of you saw Will Rogers in the moving picture "The Ambassador" in which he took the part of an ambassador to some country, presumably, of middle Europe. During the picture a drunken senator from the United States makes a speech in an underground meeting place of the Reds. It is a speech which, being in the American language, none of the assembled Socialists can understand. But he concludes loudly with the words "Liberty! Equality! Fraternity!" Whereupon the Socialists all greet him as a comrade. Not all who cry "Progress! Progress!" will vote a Progressive ticket. Not all those who talk loudest of liberty will support the Civil Liberties Union. Nor are all who claim to be Unitarians necessarily religious liberals. In our Unitarian denomination we were threatened not so very long ago with a practical substitute for a creed. I refer to the five points which were once the personal belief of James Freeman Clarke. If I believed literally in every one

of those points, I should still take care to find new ways of expressing them lest they become stereotyped substitutes for thought and action.

Words may become simply pleasing and familiar sounds. As such they may serve as an emotional escape-mechanism. Various mystics of India used the word "Om" to develop a religious experience that was exactly the opposite of comprehensive. By gazing at their navel and saying "Om" they were able to shut out every concrete image of outer reality and so reach what they thought was unity with the infinite, but which was more probably a condition of self-hypnosis. Their experience was not a transcending one because there was no comprehension of reality left in them to transcend. It would probably shock certain good ladies who call themselves religious liberals if they were to discover that their religious experience on Sunday was achieved in very much the same manner as that of the navel-gazer who said "Om," because they also used words merely to escape reality. I have often wondered how much would be left of the religious experience of some people if the specific sets of words that they had been conditioned to were taken away—be it the Psalms, the Lord's Prayer or anything else.

A friend of mine came to me with a Christian Science publication and asked me whether there was anything wrong with his brain because he'd read a certain passage three times and it didn't mean anything to him. The passage read to the effect that God means the same thing as Omnipotent Truth, Love, Spirit, Availability, All-in-all, Divine Principle, Mind and Soul, and that you could read these designations of divinity backwards and forwards and that they all meant the same thing. Of course I assured my friend there was nothing wrong with his brain, but that there would have been if he had claimed to understand what those words mean.

I was sufficiently interested to look up some of the given references and selected the following passage typical of many:

> "Spirit, Life, Truth, Love, combine as one . . . All Substance, Intelligence, Wisdom, Being, Immortality, Cause and Effect, belong to God. His attributes are the eternal manifestations of the Infinite Divine Prin-

> ciple, Love. No Wisdom is Wise but His Wisdom, no Truth is True, no Love is Lovely, no Life is Life, but the Divine."

Now what does that mean to you? Anything? Is that the way to use words so as to induce *comprehending* experience . . . that is to say, experience that implies complete knowledge or mental grasp of anything? I do not think so. The reason those words seem to mean the same thing is that they mean nothing. They are devoid of the concrete images and pictures which give meaning to words.

Cassius J. Keyser in a recent article expressed the notion in this way. He made the two assertions: "X is Y" and "God is Love." "What is the difference between these two?" he asks. None whatsoever until we define the words God and Love. None until we put content into them by definition. And as I have endeavored to show you, the only way to avoid the interminable burden of constant re-definition is to sidestep it by building a new service out of modern thought.

The task of building a new ritual is not an easy one. It involves give and take in our own church. I reasoned that the ritual was the congregation's part of the service and the sermon mine. So I sent out some questionnaires and received thirty replies and with them evidence of almost as many likes and dislikes. Some wanted responsive readings and some did not. Some wanted petitional prayer, some meditation, some nothing. The problem became more, not less, difficult. Because, however, of the widening gap between what is said on Sunday in the old language of faith and what is lived the rest of the week, an increasing responsibility for change or re-definition is felt.

Certain obvious difficulties are encountered when we do try to build up a new service. One is simply that new phrasings lack the feeling that comes with long repetition and familiarity. People are not yet conditioned to the words. But this is not an insurmountable difficulty. Every attitude of devotion, reverence and aspiration that is desirable can become attached to any set of words by constant usage. At one time in my development I experimented with this. Through a letter written to my aunt by my mother when I was but five

years of age I learn that I had been taught the Lord's Prayer and said it each evening at bedtime. Long after the pendulum of my thought and feelings had swung away from theism I was embarrassed to discover that the Lord's Prayer continued to thrust itself into my consciousness. It was a conditioned response which I could not escape. So, in self-defense, I adopted the expedient of saying over the nomenclature of the Lewis machine-gun whenever the prayer arose in my inner life. The result was that I soon found that I could obtain exactly the same emotional quality from repeating the parts of the Lewis machine-gun that I had obtained from the Lord's Prayer. The old emotions and attitudes persisted. The Lord's Prayer was still a part of me.

Accordingly I do not mean to be unsympathetic to those who love the challenged materials, because I understand the emotional situation they face. When after my theological studies I returned to the Second Church of Boston, from which I had entered The Meadville Theological School, I had parted mentally with the ideas expressed by the ritual of that church, but it was a ritual I had learned to love. I had on occasion carried the cross or the flag in the processional. On my return I found that there was a conflict in me between head and heart. I had rejected the ideology of the service but I continued to love and respond to it emotionally. The result was a serious inner conflict. Transition is usually painful, however necessary.

The development of a new liturgy however will not involve merely or chiefly the transfer of old attitudes to new words. It will bring an entirely new psychology. Our whole service needs to be overhauled in the light of the type of life we seek to cultivate and of the way in which the words harmonize with the scientific world-view. That is the starting point. Then we should demand good literary quality of the elements we use. A service should use the language of synthesis and not of analysis. Analyzing is an activity that should be left to the sermon, the church forum and the discussion groups. A meditation or prayer is no place for critical analysis or didactic exhortation. But it must be able to stand critical examination. Some of the unemotional words

of the scientific laboratory are disqualified for service use, not because they cannot be emotionalized, but because they do not produce an experience of the unity or interrelatedness of man and life. One object of the service should be to promote the "greatest possible mutuality." The language of analysis will not do this. Hence we should study the word-patterns of our new ritual and the function they perform.

For instance, we say "May we"—that is the prelude to the aspirational attitude. "May we walk in this new day without fear or any kind of bondage."

We say "Let us"—this is the attitude of resolution. "Let us rejoice in the manifold riches of life about us and within."

We use the language of appreciation, saying "We are grateful for," "We rejoice in," "We acknowledge." This attitude of appreciation is the value-seeking process of the service, the drawing to one center, the higher self within, of the values we live for. Thus we say "We are grateful for the gift of life" or "We love the deep blue sky and the smiling water."

We use also the pattern of affirmation, "We love," "We believe." The *amo* and *credo* continue in new forms as in this: "We believe in the goodness of life realizable in this present world, available to all the children of men who seek the masteries of the spirit."

Apotheosis, as in the following arrangement of Max Eastman's invocation to truth, is often acceptable:

> Truth be more precious to us than the eyes
> Of happy love; burn hotter in our throat
> Than passion, and possess us like our pride.
> More sweet than freedom, more desired than joy,
> More sacred than the pleasing of a friend!

Within these and other patterns of expression we can bring to consciousness the concrete values and purposes of our existence and focus them upon our shared quest for the good life.

But, you may say, such a service is not objective. Well, the old prayers were directed with meaning to hundreds of different conceptions of God, some of which couldn't have been true. Though they were all thought to be objective

realities, their real meaning was largely a subjective one. The gods, even if false, played a part within man's inner being. They became objective by projection in the way that a plan can be objective. It is the use of evaporated words without content that is really subjective. Content from the living world will make any service as objective in reference as any words can be.

The new religious experience, it seems to me, has a two-fold function and each function has its objective feature. In the first place, it is a quest for or a reaching out toward what Dean Sperry calls the "kingdom of ends." It is a pursuit of the ideal. An ideal means something that is not yet "us." A socially conscious faith is one directed toward a better humanity or overgroup. Any such ideal social order is objective, even if, like the gods, the order eventually achieved proves to be different from that which was believed in. Then in the second place, the new religious experience will be an end in itself. It will be direct appreciation of values. Values are always the result of what goes on between the human spirit and something objective to it. They exist by virtue of interaction. The new religious experience will not be exclusively objective, but it will be so in part, which is all that can be claimed for the worship of any god.

You may also ask "Does this new experience answer the hunger for the personal?" It is my own belief that the Christian use of Jesus or of God to answer the hunger for the personal is a compensatory use and that the needed answer to that hunger is a reconstructed social situation in which human beings can mean more to each other. If we cannot answer the hunger for the personal ourselves, then we have failed in our humanity and had better admit it. A compensating theology amounts, in my own scheme of things, to a confession of failure by man to make satisfying personal adjustments. This, it seems to me, is one of the great aims we should work for—not to substitute theology for the personal element but to supply that personal element as nature meant it should be provided, by being human one to another. As we learn how to mean more to each other, religion will move on proportionately to greater and greater concern with the

social conditions which will make our personal loyalties enduring and secure.

The new faith will not advance the quest for values or the love and service of the overgroup primarily as a means of sublimation for frustrated love and friendship, but as a necessary condition and valid complement to love and friendship. Participation in the overgroup is necessary to make individual human relations satisfying. But it also is, or can be, an outlet for creative expression and fulfillment.

Finally you will say "But your service cuts man off from the universe—he is isolated in the cosmos that produced him." Not if the service develops our experience comprehensively. If it is inclusive, it will induce the experience of our unity with an infinite creation from which we have emerged, of which we are a part, one and interpenetrated. This answer is sorely needed in a civilization where people are cut off by steel and concrete from the discipline and renewal of natural forms, colors and movements. Where Positivism erred because of its Cartesian philosophy, to-day's Evolutionary Naturalism corrects the error.

This then is a sketch of my thoughts for a new ritual. These thoughts are built on what I see emerging. To begin with, the man we want to see in the world and then to ask of all elements not only "Are they good literature?," "Have they content and meaning?," "Have they rhythm and beauty?," but "Do they make people think?," "Do they lead them to work for brotherhood and peace?," "Do they bring us into relation with the source of our being?," "Do they develop a satisfying sense of values?," "Do they offer stirring objectives?" These questions asked and answered will build a service that will have genuine influence in the life of the world.

*The Criteria of an Adequate Economic System

Robert J. Hutcheon

Few contrasts in human thought and feeling are more striking than that between the communistic conception of private property as exemplified by the Russian Bolshevists and the individualistic conception of private property as exemplified by the average successful English or American business man. For the Communist, private property is the source of our major human ills, the corrupter of human nature, the insidious destroyer of the natural social order, an accursed institution built on robbery, maintained by force, and motivated by human greed. Hence the Communist sees no hope for humanity save in the destruction of the capitalistic order, root and branch.

On the other hand, the successful man of affairs in capitalistic countries has been hardly less extreme in his glorification of private property. Forgetting or ignoring the history of private property and its attributes, he has looked upon the right of property as absolute and unconditional, as a natural right independent of the laws and institutions of society, as something unalterable and inalienable, as inclusive even of the right to destroy and waste. In the extremity of his individualism he has come to feel that anything may become the object of a property-right and that, when once it has taken on that form, it is for all practical purposes sacred and inviolable. Hence all distinctions between different forms of property are for him abolished. Wages, salary, homes, tools, capital actively used by its owner in production, royalties, ground-rents, monopoly-profits, inherited estates — all these forms of property are equally valid and the owners of

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them have equal rights to the undisturbed enjoyment of them and the protection of them by the State whether these owners are performing any social function by means of their property or not. Property for the extreme individualist has come to mean mere ownership divorced from social obligation and any movement that questions ownership or would enforce obligation is resented by him as an infringement of his personal rights.

It will hardly be necessary to spend much time in refuting the second of these theories. All that is necessary for its refutation is a calm survey of the historical process through which our so-called property-rights have come down to us. The right of property has been subject to a long evolution. The content of the term "property" has passed through many changes. It has meant ownership of human beings such as slaves, wives and children; ownership of herds and flocks; of roads and highways; of personal goods; of movable objects; of land; of copyright and patent-rights; of bonds and stocks; of trade-marks and franchises and even of the good-will of a business or of a professional man. It is surely absurd to clap the word "property" on all these things and then contend that the right of property is absolute, inalienable and inviolable.

The political status of the individual property-holder has also been subject to evolution. At one time only a sovereign could hold it; at another time only the head of a family. At one time the right was denied to slaves, strangers and women; now it is granted to all, even to so-called "legal persons," such as firms, corporations and foundations.

Finally the so-called attributes of property — the right to use, to give away, to sell or lease and to bequeath—have been limited in some respects in all ages and in all countries and some of them are now being challenged more and more by the State through "eminent domain," the police-power and income and inheritance taxes.

The whole doctrine of "natural rights" on which the advocate of the second theory generally relied has been transformed in the last half century under the influence of the idea of evolution and the new historical attitude which that

idea has rendered inevitable. Neither in the form which Locke gave it in the interest of an extreme individualism, namely, "a man has a right to his own labor and to that which he mixes with his labor," nor in the form which Marx gave it in the interest of Socialism, namely, "the laborer has a right to the whole produce of his labor," is the principle of natural rights any longer tenable. Rights are meaningless apart from duties. A man's right to the product of his labor is limited by his duty to the community and since the wealth of all modern communities is produced by coöperative labor, no one knows how much he produces and therefore the principle "the laborer has a right to the whole produce of his labor" gives no guidance as to a just distribution among all the factors involved.

On the other hand, the case for private property is not as hopeless as Communists proclaim it to be. We may grant that private property exists only in and through society, that a man's own is only what society and law allow, that private property, where it is recognized, is not based on any right inherent in the individual and yet affirm that private property in some things at least has a moral basis in so far as it is thought to be for the good of society as a whole. Even extreme Communism has to allow a man's property in his food, his tooth-brush, his indispensable clothing, his shelter, and a great many more of the common necessities of life. It does not and cannot abolish private property altogether; it only tries to reduce to a minimum this right of private use implied in property. Communists are on firm ground when they contend that every institution is to be judged by its contribution to the good of the whole, but when we ask them what the good of the whole is, they can only answer that it is that good which expresses itself in the good lives of its individual members. And it is in some such statement as this that the real meaning of the doctrine of "natural rights" finds expression. As there is no society apart from its individual members, so there is no social good save that in which the individual members participate and by which they are helped to become more efficient, self-reliant and coöperative units in their group.

There is no sense, therefore, in defending capitalistic or denouncing communistic theories of private property on abstract, *a priori* grounds. Rather, the strategy of those who wish to defend private property should be something like this: In the first place, they should abandon the eighteenth century philosophy of natural rights, cease to defend the present distribution of property by falling back on past deliverances of the courts or on the authority of the constitution and the law and frankly acknowledge that private property rests on a basis of utilitarianism, and, in the second place, they should try to find out what kinds of concrete private property are worth preserving because of their benefits to their individual owners and to the social group to which these owners belong and then confine their defence of private property to these forms.

On the basis of some such arguments as the above I assume in this paper the doctrine that utility to the individual and society is the only possible and the only necessary defence of private property. But general utility after all is a vague principle. Who is to decide what is useful? What sort of inquiry can we institute in order to find out whether a communistic or a socialistic or a capitalistic economic system produces the greatest amount of general utility? Are there any objective tests that we can apply? Is any Pope or Il Duce or Bolshevist Dictator or Capitalistic Overlord able to tell us *ex cathedra* what is useful for us? I can see no escape from subjectivity in the whole matter. The best we can do is to look for the more universal elements in our subjective desires and then use those universal elements cautiously and critically as a sort of norm to determine what we are to mean by the term general utility. We can look into our own minds and interrogate our neighbors with a view to finding out what the various values are which we want any economic system to secure for us and then ask to what extent any actual or proposed economic system is meeting or is likely to meet our demands. It is to the first part of this inquiry that I propose to devote the rest of this paper.

Out of the distress of the present hour comes the demand for more *economic security*. No economic system, we seem

compelled to say, can be regarded as adequate or permanent that cannot prevent such a disastrous business depression as we are passing through now. Of course we may easily overstress this element of security. We must not expect more from an economic system than it can possibly give. No system can eliminate all risks. The rainfall may be inadequate; insects or tornadoes or frost may destroy the crops; the mines may peter out; disease may spread among the domesticated animals; storms at sea may sink the ships that carry merchandise; demand over the counter may change and take away all value from great stores of goods that have been toilsomely produced; the law of diminishing returns will sooner or later assert itself. Neither capitalism nor communism can either foresee or forestall all of these dire possibilities. Perhaps some allowance must be made, also, for those who want adventure rather than security. The Lindberghs, Scotts, Amundsens, etc., are always eager to leave the known and secure behind them and steer their course towards the unknown and the uncertain. But this adventuresomeness has little economic significance. Probably most of these risk-takers both proceed from and return to a fairly dependable economic basis. We may dismiss them from our thought, therefore, and reasonably assert that the desire for economic security is fundamental and practically universal. We should all be glad to have some sort of guarantee that, in return for our labor or our willingness to work, we shall have food, shelter, clothing, fuel and a little amusement. We are all timid enough to desire continuity of employment, provision against the accidents of life and some kind of consideration for us, on the part of the community, in such periods of helplessness as cannot be avoided. The penalty for the wide diffusion of culture is that an increasing number of people cannot enjoy the present fully unless some provision can be made for their future. Savages can, but not men and women with active imaginations. Hence we may expect that the demand for security will grow in volume and intensity as the years go by.

Now it is impossible to indict the capitalistic system on the ground of its inability to produce all we need. It has made possible in Western Europe and America a prodigious

increase of population during the nineteenth century. Through the use of mechanical power, machinery and mass production, almost any desirable increase of output is made possible. We cannot make land or gold or silver or iron ore or rain or oil, but so far as these are discoverable in nature, we have the mechanical equipment to make the most of them for economic ends. And yet, in spite of our imposing industrial system, it offers little security for the masses of the people. We do not begin to compare in this regard with civilizations much more backward than our own. Even in primitive agricultural society every boy on coming of age had the basis of his life-economy secured to him by the social structure—his share in the family land, the right to pasture, meadow and waste and the right to clear land in the waste. In the Feudal System, which seems to us now such an anachronism when we come upon traces of it in England, Eastern Prussia, Hungary and Roumania, the basis of the individual's work and livelihood was secured to him. Our historians tell us that the step from status to contract was a step up, and no doubt it was, but, though the serf gained his freedom, he lost his land; though he got his liberty, he lost his security. In the old system he was sure of his food or, if that failed, all classes starved together; but in the newer system he must have wages in order to get food and wages are not always forthcoming. Professor Hobhouse, no alarmist, estimates that five out of every six children now born in an industrial community are born to no assured place in the industrial system. This may be truer for England than for America but it must be measurably true here also. What does it mean? It means that while the door of the public school stands wide open for every child when he becomes six or seven years old, while citizenship and the franchise are freely conferred on every young man and woman who reaches twenty-one years of age, while the courts stand open for the protection of the rights and liberties of every citizen, no one has any guarantee that he will find a secure place in the economic system, in a word, that he will find a job. The great mass of wage-earners have no control over the agencies of production and those who have such control have no feeling of re-

sponsibility for caring for their own unemployed and hence, when no employment can be secured, the wage-earner has no economic status in his community and, in spite of his citizenship, must feel himself an outsider and a burden upon the charitable agencies of his neighbors.

I am not contending that it is ever likely to be an easy matter to guarantee employment or, when employment fails, to maintain the standards of life by public assistance. All I am arguing for is that the demand for security is a reasonable demand and that the capitalistic system, if it is to endure, must pay more attention to it than in the past. We have been so eager to make profits that we have paid little attention to the human costs of what we have called industrial progress. The machine has been installed without regard to the displacement of labor and as a result we have armies of unemployed whose future is extremely insecure. Why should we be surprised if such men should turn to any economic system that promised them security? A great deal of frank, honest, critical thinking must be done by American statesmen, business men and economists if the present industrial system is to adjust itself to the reasonable demands which the wage-earners are now making for increased security.

But security is not enough. The argument of Aristotle for private property, that is, for guaranteed and exclusive use of some wealth, is still valid. Property, Aristotle said, is necessary for *the full expression of personality.* A purposeful life needs things that one can count as his own, that he can leave and return to, that he can use as he will. Man as a rational, cultural animal needs a multiplicity of things to realize his powers. If we were to provide the lower animals with beautiful clothes, furnished homes, books, musical instruments, tools and utensils, automobiles and aeroplanes, they could make no use of them so as to become greater than they now are. They can become all that it is possible for them to become without any of these forms of property. But man cannot become a complete human being without an increasing dominion over things. Rob the human race of its clothes, houses, productive capital, transportation facilities and other material possessions, and you not only force all men back into a state of subjection to the elemental forces of

nature, but you also make it impossible for them to become persons. Property is essential to the realization of personality. If it is legitimate to say that man's end in this world is to achieve personality, it is equally legitimate to say that he has a right to the means by which alone personality can be achieved, namely, property. In this sense it is true that man's right to property is natural and as such prior to the laws and institutions of *any particular society*. One may go so far as to say that the worth of any particular society is determined by its success in guaranteeing to individual men and women the opportunity and the means to become persons, that is, by its success in creating and diffusing an adequate amount of private property.

At first hearing this contention may seem innocuous and insignificant. But a second look shows that it contains a good deal of dynamite. Any society that accepted it could not long tolerate the present distribution of wealth. The argument is double-edged. It can be used not only in a conservative campaign to uphold some of the property-rights of the present holders of property, but also in a progressive campaign to extend the privilege of the ownership of property to all the adult members of society. It is an acknowledgment that property is indispensable to personality but is also a confession that the accumulation of property may be carried to a point where it is no longer healthy for the soul. It is a demand that every human being shall have the opportunity to become a person if he wishes to avail himself of it and a refusal to allow any one to own so much property that his ownership of it gives him control over the bodies and souls of others. When we combine both sides of the argument, we find that it is a permanently valid one. From the individual's point of view, the moral justification of private property is the right of every human being to become a person and, therefore, to have access to the means for the achievement of such personality, namely, private property. How much each one needs is another question and one not easy to answer, but at least it may be said that each one's need ought to be determined by the nature and variety of his interests and the significance of the social function he is performing.

Whenever a community undertakes in any degree to

guarantee the economic security of its citizens, it finds itself confronted by three obstacles: it has to prevent the lazy from loafing; it has to stimulate its ablest members to do their best while guarding against their tendency to become selfish exploiters; and, if it is not itself to become tyrannical and oppressive, it must avoid the blight of too much centralization. It must encourage industry, originality, enterprise, individuality and character, and yet it must not undermine the personality which is the basis of all these qualities by too much external prodding of the indolent or too much external restraint of the eager and the selfish. Capitalism has solved the problem of laziness in prosperous times by quoting Scripture: "he that will not work, let him not eat" or at least let him eat sparingly and it has solved the problem of stimulating the eager and able by letting them charge for their services all that the traffic will bear—with the result that "big business" has a strangle hold on the industrial and even the political life of the community.

Now the easy way of making the loafer work and of preventing the selfish from becoming exploiters is to centralize all the powers of control and direction in a few hands. Russian Communism has followed that course and the fate of Trotsky and others of the earlier leaders shows how thoroughly and ruthlessly the plan has been worked. We are already familiar with such a system in the religious world. Nothing could have been more foreign to the mind of Jesus than mediaeval or modern Roman Catholicism and yet at every point in history when the church assumed new powers its defenders found what seemed to them creditable reasons for the assumption of these powers. The results of such power have long been obvious, namely, the intellectual and moral stultification of the mass of Christian believers. The hierarchy have forbidden everything that would endanger their own position and the laity have not had enough enlightenment to perceive or enough moral courage to resent the spiritual tutelage in which they have been kept. That is the inevitable result of the centralization of spiritual authority.

It is hard to see how it can be different in economic matters. Power is power whether economic or spiritual, and those

who once become masters of it are slow to yield it up and slow to experiment with any ideas that do not come out of their own heads. Protected from the criticism of those who do not agree with them, they are too easily convinced of the wisdom of their own plans and being, by virtue of their nature and position, masterful men, they are willing to try out at the expense of the community as a whole, schemes whose impracticability free criticism might have disclosed.

It is difficult, then, to see how all the values of an adequate economic system can be gained by a highly centralized organization of the economic life. The demand for *security* might be adequately met by such a centralization of control but not the demand for *personality.* The power of planning and deciding for one's self is as important a factor in the good life of society as the sense of community and interdependence. No ultimate good can come to a civil community, any more than to a church, by the suppression of individuality and character in its members. A current criticism of our American economic system is that "the power of private property extends into every corner of social life and is infinitely more indeterminate and fluid than political power." That criticism I believe to be profoundly true but we would not be changing the situation, so far as its psychological bearing on personality is concerned, by committing our economic fortunes to an autocratic centralized communistic control.

We are face to face with an extremely perplexing problem. We must make the loafers work and we must restrain the eager selfish exploiters and we must do both without creating a machine that will be liable to become a Frankenstein. That is the crux of all reform programs. As William James used to say, it would require for its solution men who have sprung from the union of an angel and a steam-engine. Too much angel would mean too many holidays for the loafers; too much steam-engine would mean violence and repression and ultimately oppression, but a happy combination of both might result in that energy which would produce enough to meet the reasonable demand for *security* and in that patience and wisdom which would preserve enough freedom to meet the equally reasonable demand for *personality.*

I have said that any adequate economic system must meet, first, the demand for security and, second, the demand for the expression of personality. But one other demand must not be omitted, namely, *the demand for justice in distribution.* Every student of social philosophy knows how difficult it is to formulate a clear and defensible concept of justice in distribution. Who knows how much he should receive for the specific contribution he is making to the goods and services of his community? All the canons of distribution that have been suggested thus far have been found unworkable both in theory and practice, whether the canon of equality or the canon of effort or the canon of need or the canon of productivity. It may be that the four canons could be so harmonized as to furnish some formal guidance in the work of distribution, but no such comprehensive conception seems to be in wide and effective use today. And yet without any clearly thought-out theory of distribution there is what we may call a sort of practical unformulated sense of justice in the minds of intelligent people everywhere. It is hard to get at the real thinking of people on this matter, if there is any real thinking, but one gets the impression that there is little if any demand for equality of reward. We have been accustomed in this country to pay more to those men and women who show skill or expertness or managerial power or who assume great responsibilities than to those who perform the routine and less responsible services. Our so-called American horse-sense makes it easy for us to reconcile ourselves to a considerable degree of difference in salaries and fees and inheritances. But the same horse-sense assures us that the distribution of wealth which prevails in the Western world cannot be defended either on grounds of ideal justice or on the grounds of rough and ready fair play. And Professor Taussig supports this horse-sense when he says: "The history of modern capitalism tells a mixed story—not only of vigor and competition and progress, but of monopoly, exploitation, unearned increments and unearned incomes. The wrongs of the past, perpetuated by inheritance, weigh heavily on almost all of the modern world." We know enough of the past to be sure that much digging into the history of the

founding and development of great fortunes would in many cases unearth a multitude of unsavory facts about them, facts such as fraud, cruelty, brutality, slavery, privilege and unethical luck.

In the presence of such facts what I have called the rough and ready sense of justice feels very uneasy. It feels that there is something profoundly wrong even though it may not be able to diagnose the ailment. And out of this uneasiness there grows a sense of frustration and out of the sense of frustration a rebellious spirit which may lead one knows not where.

Of the evils which the institution of private property as it exists both in law and in practice is now producing, the outstanding ones are the unearned increments of building-sites in growing cities, the profits of monopolized industries and the colossal inheritances which men of great wealth bequeath to their children. These form the unholy trinity of the present capitalistic system. It is these three forms of wealth which are the occasion of the most bitter attacks on the institution of private property as a whole, and if the institution is to be saved and made acceptable to reasonable people, these abuses must be curbed. The task of curbing them is a threefold one. It is the intellectual task of thinking out the most effective means of achieving the end desired, the educational task of convincing the general public of the need for the proposed action and the political task of creating the legal instrumentalities by which the action may be carried out. Each part of the task is formidable enough, but so many thinking people are now convinced of the necessity for socializing an increased portion of these forms of wealth that increased activity in this or similar directions in the future is surely unavoidable. The tremendous suffering, uncertainty and indignation of the last two years can hardly leave us as indifferent to the problem of justice in distribution as we were prior to the collapse of 1929.

To sum up: any adequate economic system must meet the demand for security, the demand for the free expression of personality and the demand for a fairly obvious justice in distribution. I shall not undertake to say what actual or pro-

posed system meets or is likely to meet them most fully. In America at least our economic future is not likely to be determined by abstract or doctrinaire considerations. Our working philosophy is pragmatic and we could hardly breed the fanaticism which would ruin our institutions and destroy a large portion of our population for the sake of trying out an elaborate *a priori* scheme. I assume that it is psychologically impossible as yet to remove from the hearts of most Americans the interest in private property. The balance of probabilities is strongly in favor of the persistence of our interest in it. Therefore our immediate concern must be that of pruning away the gross excesses of the institution rather than its abolition. But I think we must not overlook or underestimate the value of the appeal of the central principle of communism. There are many things in the communistic program that cannot appeal to the typical American—its use of force, its doctrinaire habit of mind, its relentless persecution of its opponents, its inculcation of hatred, its unending espionage, its overconfidence in the centralizing principle in economic and political life—but the goal of all its endeavor and of all its teaching is something new in the history of the world, namely (and here I use the language of J. M. Keynes), that "the career of money-making shall simply not occur to a respectable young man any more than the career of a burglar. Money-making and money-accumulating cannot enter into the life-calculations of a rational man who accepts the Soviet rule in the way in which it enters into ours. A society of which this is even partially true is a tremendous innovation. A revolution in our ways of thinking and feeling about money may become the growing purpose of contemporary embodiments of the ideal."

How prophetic these words may be as regards America I know not, but it is obvious that if the appeal to the money-motive which is now habitual and almost universal should be profoundly modified the problem of private property would soon solve itself. No one would want more than he needed for his security and his cultural purposes, and cut-throat competition would come to an end.